

R 171227Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4370
INFO WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
DIA WASHINGTON DC
CIA WASHINGTON DC
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
FRG COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USOSCE
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE//J5 DIRECTORATE (MC)//
CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
UDITDUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

UNCLAS BERLIN 000725

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PAPD, EUR/PPA, EUR/CE, INR/EUC, INR/P,
SECDEF FOR USDP/ISA/DSAA, DIA FOR DC-4A

VIENNA FOR CSBM, CSCE, PAA

"PERISHABLE INFORMATION -- DO NOT SERVICE"

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [GM](#) [US](#) [CU](#) [MD](#) [SO](#) [IT](#) [RS](#) [UP](#) [GG](#) [KG](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Iran U.S.-Iran Iran-Internet
U.S.-Guantanamo Georgia Economic-BRIC

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary
- [1](#)2. (Iran) Aftermath of Presidential Elections
- [1](#)3. (U.S.-Iran) Obama Reaction
- [1](#)4. (Iran) Effect of the Internet
- [1](#)5. (U.S.) Guantanamo Prisoners
- [1](#)6. (Georgia) Unomig Mission
- [1](#)7. (Economic) BRIC Countries Meeting

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Editorials focused on the events in Iran, the planned strike of up to 200,000 students to protest the educational situation at Germany's university, and the publication of the German recipients of EU agricultural subsidies. The headlines in the press are dominated by the most recent developments in Iran. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast Heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with reports on the protests in Iran.

- [1](#)2. (Iran) Aftermath of Presidential Elections

ARD-TV's Tagesthemen commented: "The West criticized Ahmadinejad and thus also encouraged the Iranians to express their criticism. Now Iran's citizens want to get rid of Ahmadinejad. But at the same time, one cannot remain silent when human rights are disrespected [in Iran]. In this situation it is not enough that the Foreign Ministry summons the Iranian ambassador to Germany and raises a few critical questions. How many Iranians must die on the streets before Angela Merkel talks turkey with Iran?"

According to Sueddeutsche Zeitung, "new violence is likely. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a twitter between a theocratic dictatorship and a democracy, a state in which personal freedom has been massively restricted for decades. Soon, the issue will no longer be the outcome of the elections but the issue will be freedom. Like in all authoritarian systems, the leadership is afraid that any sign of weakness will result in more demands. In addition, Ahmadinejad has expanded the revolutionary guards...and President Khamenei knows this. He is the most powerful man in the state. Now he is damned to find a balance between the extremes. He is a conservative, an Islamist down to the bone - and in case of doubt he could decide against the opposition."

Under the headline: "Wise Opposition," Tagesspiegel argued: "Hussein Mousavi is now demonstrating iron nerves: the first Monday protest rally is over and there is still a long way to go until the manipulated elections will be annulled. The hardliners certainly have learned their lesson. On Tuesday, they sent their hardliners to the place where Mousavi supporters wanted to hold their second large-scale meeting. We do not need too much vision to imagine what would happen if the two camps confronted each other. Mousavi no longer has a headquarters or his own newspaper. But thanks to the Internet, he can communicate from his apartment with millions of his supporters. And the most recent one was: Do not risk your lives, stay at home and do not fall in the trap of organized street battles. Many of his supporters took part in a rally anyway - and moved to a different part of the city."

Stuttgarter Zeitung noted: "The digital world has developed an unexpected dynamics in the reformist camp that offers the hardliners arguments for radical counter measures. In their eyes the issue is the legacy of Iranian founding father Ayatollah Khomeini. The wind of change caused by the Internet could now force the power centers in Iran to move closer together. And these centers play the main role. The armed forces, the intelligence services, police, and cells from the internal Iranian leadership must join the protesters - such as in 1979 when the Shah was ousted. The reform camp will fail if it fights on its own."

Regional daily Rhein-Neckar Zeitung of Heidelberg opined: "They beat demonstrators to death, they switch off cellular phone networks, they block the Internet, but, nevertheless, protests in Iran are taking their course against 'dictator' Ahmadinejad, against an obvious electoral fraud. But what is the goal? At first sight, the repetition of the elections, but they are also fighting for alleged election winner Mousavi. Hundreds of thousands are risking a lot for this. This courage could be enough to topple the illegitimate Ahmadinejad government. But will it be enough to oust the religious caste? And is this the goal of the demonstrators? The answer to both is 'no.'"

13. (U.S.-Iran) Obama Reaction

Deutschlandfunk aired the following commentary: "What has he done wrong now? President Obama had hardly expressed his views, when critics all came out, arguing that the events in Iran are evidence of the young president's naive diplomatic approach. At the beginning [of the crisis], Obama took on a wait-and-see attitude before he expressed his views. They were as usual, carefully selected and nevertheless, clear. This is good--stay the course! Over the past few years, we have had an abundance of zealots. President Obama has never made an offer for talks dependent on the outcome of the elections. Why should he? The development in Iran is in a state of flux and it could be totally wrong to influence developments in Iran from the outside. It could poison a planned dialogue. The substance of Obama's Iran policy will not be decided now after the elections, but at the earliest at the end of the year, a deadline which the President set himself."

Frankfurter Allgemeine argued: "Following President Medvedev's friendly reception of President Ahmadinejad, it is increasingly difficult to hope that Moscow will seriously help to prevent Iran from developing military nuclear capacities. The people surrounding opposition candidate Mousavi and the democratic forces could, therefore, not expect someone to talk turkey to Ahmadinejad in Yekaterinburg. But thus far, the American president has remarkably held back. He expressed his concern about the violence against demonstrators, called for the respect for the freedom of association but avoided the term electoral fraud and confirmed instead the 'respect of Iran's sovereignty.' On the other hand, the attitude of the regime in Tehran does not give any reason that it would accept Obama's extended hand. On the contrary, Obama made advances to the Iranian leadership several times. . Over the past few days, the regime gave a sobering answer. It is to be hoped that this will not be the only Iranian answer."

14. (Iran) Effect of the Internet

In the view of Die Welt, "it is evidence of the misery of the powers-that-be that the Guardian Council has now ordered a partial recount and that international media are no longer allowed to report

on the continuous protests. What was possible during the Olympic Games in China is for the Mullahs impossible to achieve. In China, the regime switched of the Internet, but this is no longer possible in Iran. It is the Twitter users who the censorship is unable to stop. When the Internet came up, people welcomed it as the end of dictatorship and as the final blow against dictators. The cheers at that time came too early, but now it might happen any minute. We have a new media that possibly initiates the end of a formerly established regime. One thing is certain now: the Mullahs will have great difficulty ignoring the 'no' of the people to Islamic religious rule."

Regional daily Abendzeitung of Munich observed: "No, the Internet is not new, but the role it can play in such turmoil as in Iran is revolutionary. The weak have a powerful new weapon. They sit at their desks at home and read what Iranian students are writing while they sit locked up in their dormitory and shots are heard from the outside. And the world joins them, answers their news reports and helps. Censorship cannot take place with Twitter. Now it is for many Iranians the last remaining possibility to organize their protest and to win the world for their cause. The word has always been a strong weapon, and now it has found a new path."

Regional daily Klnische Rundschau of Cologne observed: "One thing is clear: Mir Hussein Mousavi, who is fighting for his election victory, is everything else but a democrat in the western sense, since the Mullahs would otherwise not have allowed him to run in the elections. But he is a carrier of hope compared with provocateur Ahmadinejad. But these enormous protests will change a lot. Many demonstrators are good at using the Internet and the new communication technology. That's the way it is in a globalized world. Everything is public. This is an enormous encouragement for all oppressed everywhere in the world. In the long run, dictatorships have no longer any means against these freedom-loving people. In Iran, the separation between religion and politics is on the agenda. A well-informed Islam that is able to conduct a dialogue - this is the real dream."

Copyright: Berliner Zeitung/Berndt A. Skott

15. (U.S.) Guantnamo Prisoners

Under the headline: "Bella Italia instead of Guantnamo," Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported: "Italy is obviously willing to accept three prisoners from the Guantnamo prison camp. Following a meeting with Prime Minister Berlusconi, President Obama explicitly thanked Berlusconi for his 'support of our policy to close Guantnamo,' and added that he appreciated Rome's gesture. Obama said on Tuesday evening: 'This is not mere rhetoric.' Since Italy will now accept three prisoners, Washington still has to decide about what to do with exactly 226 prisoners. According to the Justice Department, 'clearly more than 50' prisoners could be released immediately. Since numerous detainees come from China or Arab countries, which are accused of violating human rights and exercising torture, a deportation to their home countries is not possible."

In an editorial, Sueddeutsche opined: "The [European] criticism of the Guantnamo prison camp was cheap because the Republican president never seriously thought about closing the camp. But now that President Obama is keeping his promise to close it and wants to find a home for the 226 prisoners, many Europeans are only whispering. Only two leaders, normally ostracized as chronic bigmouths in the EU, are supporting the President: Nicolas Sarkozy and Silvio Berlusconi. And what about Berlin? Angela Merkel does not consider it necessary to interfere. But she should do so. Next week, she will visit the White House - and at the latest then she must say what is the value of her (and the Germans') friendship with the United States."

16. (Georgia) Unomig Mission

Frankfurter Allgemeine penned the following editorial: "After 16 years, a UN mission in Georgia abruptly ended overnight. Russia did not want to support a draft resolution on an extension of the military mission of the 150 military observers and police officers, and exercised its right to veto. But it was right to insist on the

vote, thus forcing Moscow to use its veto. Now it is at least clear that the Kremlin is uncompromising when it comes to the recognition of Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, thus not giving a damn about international commitments."

17. (Economic) BRIC Countries Meeting

Handelsblatt pointed out: "They lost the first round in the showdown with the established industrialized nations. Advances supported by Russia and China to question the dollar as key currency did not succeed. Even the BRIC states cannot do without the greenback. An alternative to the dollar is nowhere in sight even in times when the United States is in serious economic trouble. Nevertheless, the BRIC states should not be underestimated. They are the shooting stars of the global economy. Even in the greatest economic crisis in decades, they enjoy a greater confidence among investors than the EU and the U.S. This first summit of BRIC states in Yekaterinburg is not likely to be the last, since they consider themselves the secret challenger of the G-8. But despite their potential, they are not likely to break the G-8's power, because the four emerging states all depend on the economic development in the traditional industrialized nations. But the economic crisis has strengthened the voice of BRIC states. Without them, the G-8 will no longer be able to pursue a political strategy."

According to Sueddeutsche Zeitung, "the Russians want it, the Chinese want it, and the Arab countries want it in any case, but in the West hardly anyone listens. At issue is a new global monetary system, one that is more independent from the dollar, which is losing prestige the longer the economic crisis lasts. In the meantime, the dollar is considered an unreliable weakling. With every billion that the U.S. government and the Federal Reserve spend in Washington, the tone of the dollar critics is getting louder. And if the flow of money from Moscow and Beijing dries up, the Americans will be unable to pay for their economic stimulus programs. The West still has it in its hands to shape the new global financial order. If the West continues to ignore the proposals of the new economic powers, it is risking an uncontrolled change to a new key currency. A sudden flight from the dollar would lead to further distortions. Serious monetary turbulence would be the consequence with the corresponding implications for the global economy. It would be better to introduce a broadly based basket currency that is based on natural resources and precious metals. In the past, there were many wars about gold. This alone should be warning enough and an impetus to pursue a policy that would eventually replace the dollar [as key currency]."